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low travellers, one of whom was hastening home to die, if she might, in her own land ; and to know that all this annoyance, all this suffering, was utterly unnecessary and idle ; to hear it alleged, as a sufficient reason, that it was fair to retaliate on those coming from Italy the embarrassments thrown in the way of those who would enter it ; — these recollections have made us rejoice in any attempt to expose abuses, which may be tenfold worse under the sway of Oriental despotism, than in the most cowardly and tyrannical of European governments. We hope, that the government of England will appoint a commission to investigate the subjects brought into notice by Dr. Bowring, as is recommended by the British Association ; believing, that it may do much to promote at once the cause of humanity and of science.

2. — *A History of the First Church and Parish in Dedham. In Three Discourses, delivered on Occasion of the Completion, November 18th, 1838, of the Second Century since the gathering of said Church.* By ALVAN LAMSON, D. D., Pastor of the First Church in Dedham. Dedham. 1839. 8vo. pp. 104.

THESE belong to that valuable class of commemorative discourses, which are called out by the return of centennial and annual occasions, the object of which is, in the language of Dr. Lamson, “not so much a discourse, as a history, embracing such incidents and biographical notices, as may seem appropriate and useful.” It is well that such should be not only preached for the instruction and pleasure of those most nearly interested, but put in a permanent form for more extensive and more lasting use. “The ecclesiastical history of New England is yet to be written; and, if it is ever executed in a style worthy of the subject, it can only be by the aid of authentic details of the religious affairs of towns and parishes.” The commemorative discourses of the pulpit are therefore preparing the way for the future achievement of that great task. The least important has its value. Even the quaint, odd, trifling details extracted from the old church records, seemingly of no interest but to some hungry antiquaries, will be found to have their use in enabling the inquirer to understand more truly the character and spirit of the times and the men, and so make a truer portraiture of them. The history of the country, no less than that of the church, may be essentially aided from these sources. It was a remark of the first President Adams, that, in order to

understand how the people of New England were prepared for the Revolution and fitted for their new government, it is necessary to know their town histories and town governments. There is no better way of being acquainted with them, than by means of such inquiries into their old records and local traditions, as furnish the matter of centennial discourses.

Dedham may be, in some fortunate particulars, distinguished above most other villages ; but we suppose, that, on the whole, the picture of olden time which it exhibits, is a fair likeness of all the other early settlements. A few families seeking a home in the wilderness, are induced, by some appearances in the localities which suit their fancies or their pursuits, to select the neighbourhood of "Little River," or "Wigwam Plain." They put up their hasty shelters, and call themselves a town ; they frame at once their constitution of government, styled "the Town Covenant," expressly based, as became religious exiles, on Christian principles. In 1637 they are thirty families ; a minister is among them, and they hold public worship under the covert of one of the large trees which shaded the plain. But soon, feeling ashamed, as the king of Israel did, that the ark of God should abide abroad while they lived beneath roofs, they project a meetinghouse, thirty-six feet by twenty, and twelve feet high. This they occupy as soon as it is covered in, and finish it by degrees, as they have leisure ; in nineteen years, they get so far as "to have it lathed upon the studs, and so daubed and whitened over workman-like ;" and, about the same time, they "set up" a gallery, in order to adequately accommodate the one hundred and sixty-six families to which the settlement has grown. Very close must they have sat, those families ; in modern times, they would need a church of more than double the capacity.

Meantime, while the town has raised the building, the few who are accounted worthy, organize the church ; at first, six in number ; proceeding cautiously, and leaving a record of every step for the benefit of future ages. Here, too, they are determined not to jeopard their liberty, and will not proceed till they have received from the Governor a satisfactory explanation of a certain ordinance of State, which seemed to prohibit their forming a church without the advice of other churches. This is one of numberless characteristic incidents that crowd the history of New England, not of great moment in itself, but serving to justify Burke's remark, that "the fierce spirit of liberty was stronger in the English colonies, probably, than in any other people of the earth." Having obtained satisfaction, they frame the church, in the simple way of the Puritans, and elect and ordain their own officers. Their

minister, Mr. Allin, is a man of gifts and influence, widely employed in the controversies and synods which had place during his ministry, and which make up no small part of the important transactions of the time. At the same time he is a thriving man in worldly affairs, becomes one of the largest landholders in the town, "hath a good stock of cattle, and a good accommodation in corn land and meadow," a salary of sixty pounds, and the governor's widow for his wife. He died after a ministry of thirty-three years, with such a reputation for sweetness of disposition, that the anagram-makers summed up his character in this, — "In Honi All."

Thus ends the first generation, in whose days the institutions of religion, and a severe simplicity of life, were the first considerations. But now a change begins. The original settlers are gone, and the sons, bred in the hardships of the forest, are inferior to the fathers, who had been educated in the halls of Oxford, and amid the comforts of Old England's civilization. There is less tranquillity in the town; occasions of difference arise; jealousies spring up between those to whom are assigned the higher and lower seats of their little cathedral; and the pulpit rings with complaints of the degeneracy of the times, and lamentations for error and sin. One candidate after another is invited in vain to take charge of the church; at one period, the pulpit is vacant for eight years; and, when supplied, the town is perplexed to devise ways and means of paying the stipend. We hurry over a half century, and at length find the ministry given to Samuel Dexter, a name that has descended through four generations of honor; and soon the romantic features of the primitive era disappear, and we find ourselves amongst the prosaic scenes and interests of our own every-day life.

Dr. Lamson's Discourses, with their copious notes, are full of interest, not only from the unusual richness of the materials, but from the happy way in which he disposes them. In his sketches of the manners of the times, and the character of the fathers, he gives a picture as vivid as that of a novel; and, in the discussion of authorities and hints respecting the old controversies, he uses all the careful gravity of history. To one who would find a scene and materials for a fictitious narrative illustrative of the first century of Massachusetts, we recommend these pages as fertile in valuable hints; and we are sure that the ecclesiastical historian cannot do without them.